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FEARLESSNESS, EQUALITY AND DEVOTION TO SOCIETY *

(*By Vinoba*)

Mankind has been continually moving forward ever since it came into existence. It has been taking up and developing one quality after another in accordance with the call of the age. The spirit has innumerable qualities — as innumerable as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the earth. Every age draws forth, as it were, one of these according to its need and tries to put it into practice with all the ardour that it can command.

For example, there was a time when people realized the importance of cleanliness. They then raised it to the position of a supreme virtue and tried to implement it in their life. At another time their attention was drawn to the need for control of the carnal passion. There were, so we are told, eight different forms of marriage prevailing in those days and it was a question which of them to choose and adopt. Finally they chose one of these and vested it with great sanctity, so that it became the generally accepted form of marriage and has remained so ever since. This was a great step forward in the direction of the control of the carnal passion. It does not mean that people are now totally averse to this instinct or that they have achieved perfect mastery over it, but speaking about the society in general, we might say that they have learnt the device to keep it under proper control. In olden times it was usual for the kings to have more than one queen. They even went to the extent of capturing the widowed wives of their vanquished rivals for their harem. Such barbarities are now almost extinct.

Thus human society, in the course of its onward march, took up many diverse qualities for its practice and evolved many different social institutions as useful means to the end they had in view. Some of these, it is true, have outlived their use and must needs be scrapped now; but in the days when they were devised and introduced, they did help humanity to cultivate and realize the qualities of the spirit, — the qualities which were of the greatest importance in their respective ages.

Let us now consider what are the qualities which are of the greatest importance in our days, for, as I have been explaining to you, it is by the cultivation of the appropriate qualities of the spirit that human society is enabled to meet the challenge of every new age and go forward. So far as my study goes, it has seemed to me that at the present juncture of history we need more than anything else three great qualities: Fearlessness, equality, and devotion to society. Mankind is experiencing urgent need for these three qualities today and all its efforts, whether guided well or ill, would seem, on a closer scrutiny, to be directed towards their attainment.

Men all over the world are living today in a state of fear. Nations are busy developing weapons of greater and greater destructive power. They are making atom bombs and hydrogen bombs; why? Because they are seized with fear. America is a big country whose wealth in material resources is perhaps the greatest in the world. But even America has not escaped this general malady. America is afraid of Russia. The shadow of fear overhangs the entire world. Russia is similarly afraid of America. Nearer home, India is afraid of Pakistan and Pakistan is afraid of India. Not only are individuals living in fear, whole populations, entire nations are gripped with this debilitating disease and in consequence compelled to devise more and more destructive weapons in a vain attempt to outgrow it.

The English had disarmed Indians and for over a century until Gandhiji appeared on the scene the Indians were afraid of their rulers. But if absence of arms were the source of fear, why should America be afraid? America is well-equipped with the most modern arms and yet it lives in a state of fear. It means that fear has its source in the mind and what is required to get rid of this feeling is not recourse to arms but an attempt to uproot it at its source in the mind.

An American friend, a few days ago, asked me for a message to America. I said: I do not think I am competent to give any message to your country. But since you ask me I may as well say something. You are piling up weapons of war and you say that this keeps the people well-employed. I will not therefore ask you to stop this prosperous industry. You might even expand it so as to absorb all the rest of your unemployed and give work to everyone. But Russia is also doing the same and for a similar reason. Then some day you will both collide. Your aeroplanes will destroy theirs and their vessels will destroy yours. I therefore suggest that instead of letting them be destroyed by the other party, you should both agree to sink them in the sea yourselves on the Christmas day. This will ensure both work for all in your countries as well as peace for the world.

In old Indian polity the quality of fearlessness was regarded as a necessary feature of an ideal State. Every man and woman must feel perfectly fearless. He should know and feel that nobody can do him an injustice. Even when an injustice is done to him, he should have no cause for fear because there is *dharma* on his side and he can rest assured that finally *dharma* is bound to prevail.

Another quality that we need to cultivate at present is equality. Old Indian society was divided into hierarchically graded classes. This arrangement was designed with a view to providing appropriate education to every class according to its capacity. They thought that those who were intellectually incapable of profiting by education had better be left without it. Every class should be entrusted with just the type of work and service for which it was most fitted. So they entrusted some with the responsibility of the government of the country. Others were asked to engage in agriculture and trade and the rest were charged with rendering manual service to the entire society. In the context of the modern notions of social justice we are apt to think that this arrangement was devised by the privileged few with the evil intent of relegating the weaker sections of society to a position of permanent disability and ignominy. I

* From a speech at Monghyr on 20-10-'53.

do not think that originally there was any evil intention behind it, though in later times it was put to much abuse and resulted in grave injustice to the Shudras.

People nowadays realize that every individual can develop his abilities, both physical and intellectual, provided he is given suitable opportunity and help in the shape of education. The development of science in our times has made it possible to ensure such opportunities and education to all and now there is no need to continue the old division of classes and castes.

In the same way, even the most ordinary man nowadays has some realization of the importance of cleanliness and tries to observe it. Formerly they used to burn ghee in order to purify the air. Now science has discovered many other means of doing the same thing and made them easily available to all. Brahmanas in olden times were living for reasons of cleanliness in separate *mohallas*. Now this is meaningless and unnecessary.

Then, only Brahmanas were entitled to read and recite the Vedas, the intention being to ensure correct pronunciation. But now we have printing presses; and correctly printed books are available in any number which makes all these distinctions anachronistic. People are simply pining for equality today and they resent if they find any attempt being made to oppose this supreme demand of the age.

This leads us to the third great quality which we urgently need today,—that of devotion to society; that is, our thought and action must be aimed at the well-being of the society. There must be free scope for individual development, no doubt, but the advancement of science in our times has made it quite easy for an individual to realize all his possibilities in full measure. What therefore requires to be stressed is not individual development but the dedication by every man of his developed abilities to the service of the society. It is not enough to develop one's qualities individually; all those qualities have now got to be cultivated and firmly implanted in the entire society. This cannot be unless one devotes all his energy to the betterment of society by expanding the scope of all those qualities.

For example, individual prayer in seclusion may and does give inner strength, but in the present age congregational prayer is more important, though it does not abolish entirely the need for the former which would still have value as a means of self-introspection.

There was a time when among the different ways leading to the realization of God *dhyana-yoga* i.e. the *yoga* of meditation was accorded a very high place. *Dhyana-yoga* was more suited to individual development. Then the principle underlying this *yoga* was extended and developed for use by the people in the mass and later day saints proclaimed that congregational prayer and devotion is more effective. Their motto in this respect was well expressed in a popular verse which says:

God does not dwell in Vaikunth *
Nor in the heart of the Yogis;
He dwells where sing his devotees.

In a sense the Vaishnavas who propagated this ideal of collective prayer were the first in the modern age to realize the need for cultivating virtues not only individually but extending them so as to take the entire society in their sweep. Gandhiji has carried forward this process in another field. He experimented with the use of Ahimsa on a social scale. Ahimsa was introduced and tried by Buddha and Mahavir, Gandhiji tried to extend its scope and make it from an individual into a socially applicable virtue.

After Gandhiji, we were slipping back into our wonted lethargy. In the meanwhile, Bhoodan movement was launched and it is growing from strength to strength. By now we have received more than a lakh of gift-deeds. This is no small achievement. The reason for this tremendous success is to be found in the fact that it represents the call of the age. Had we asked the people for mere *tyaga*, i.e. renunciation, they would not have listened to us, but when we asked them to part with their land and property in the interest of the society they have readily donated, in a number of cases, their all. Even big landlords are associating themselves actively with the movement not only by bringing their donations but also by working for it. It shows that the need for merging one's individual interest in that of the society is being realized in even those quarters which stand to lose by it and could therefore be expected to oppose it.

You go to a village and tell the people that land of the village belongs not to the so-called owners but to the village community and you will find people avidly agreeing to this proposition. I am sure that if workers would put into their campaign a little more drive, we can get whole villages as gifts, because the age in which we are living demands it of us to place all we have at the service of the society, and it is beyond any man to resist the demand of the age.

India has always upheld the ideal of liberation. But what is liberation? Liberation consists in ridding oneself of the narrow personal ego and in merging oneself in the larger self of the society.

(Adapted from Hindi)

* The celestial abode of Vishnu.

SHALL WE CONTINUE TO PROSELYTE?

(*By Ralph Richard Keithahn*)

Recently a Christian leader responsible for a certain area wrote asking for the assistance of a Rural Welfare Officer, saying that if such aid was given there was a "likelihood of even caste Hindus becoming Christians". He was making a plea for my assistance on the basis of getting people to become Christians. When I reported this to the Bishop concerned, he said that such temptations would not be tolerated and that if he knew that such was being done he would discontinue Rural Welfare work.

Now comes to my hands "A Scheme" for rural development. This application includes the following paragraph: "Already there is a move among the shoe-makers' community towards Christianity and this project in addition to Adult Education work will stabilize the movement and bring it to fruition." Surely this is nothing but rank proselytization. If the Rural Welfare work which we are beginning to develop in our Churches is to be this, then we had better stop it at once.

Several years ago I came across this same kind of material temptation to get Hindus to become Christians. High quality cocks were given to villagers. Promises were made for further physical benefits. In one village over 100 people were baptized in one day. A few Hindus ran away from the village on that day to escape forcible conversion, so they told me. Later they were subjected to continual petty prosecution because they did not become Christians.

There is a growing reaction on the part of the Hindus to this kind of religious activity. Such work cannot go on as quietly as it once did.

Hindus are also more sensitive about these matters now that freedom has come and they are responsible for their own affairs. These activities will not be tolerated much longer. Many Christian leaders are disturbed because of such opposition. But they should recognize the fact that when legitimate Christian witnessing is mixed up with temptation of material gifts that there will be a curbing of legitimate religious expression as well as of illegitimate activities. It is impossible to draw a correct line and reaction against an evil will go to the other extreme.

Christians must clean up their own house. The Christian Church has a special responsibility to check on all their workers that there may be no material temptations offered for people to become Christians. In fact, we ought to lean backward in these matters. In other words, if there is any legitimate help to be given to others it should be on the basis of need and never on the basis of caste or creed. Christian leaders have been careful when they have been distributing famine relief to fulfil their promise to distribute to all in need and yet there has been a tendency to distribute such help through our own institutions or in our own Christian villages. Even this should be avoided. We should go out of our way to distribute through all trustworthy institutions and in every needy village.

When the Government is giving special help to Harijans, Christians are ever objecting and maintaining that all needy receive similar consideration. Christians should set the example and give to all without discrimination. I know this is being done and yet I also know that all too often we had given very largely to Christians and very little to others. In these days when more help for welfare projects is coming from other countries it is all the more important that our Christian organizations especially the Diocesan Councils, the Regional Christian Councils and the National Christian Council, should be extremely careful that no help should be rendered where the workers are thinking in communal terms. A foreign official said recently regarding a Mission Institution, " They seem to be fostering communalism when our National Welfare Agencies are trying to help India develop a spirit of unity and democracy." If outsiders, though Christians, are sensitive at this point then how much more the Hindu will be sensitive to our shortcomings as he is trying to develop a free and united India ?

Gandhi Gram,
Ambathurai, 25-11-'53

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BHOODAN FIGURES

(Up to 20-11-'53)

S. N.	Name of the State	Total Land Collection	Number of Donors
1.	Bihar	11,49,565	82,379
2.	Uttar Pradesh	5,00,331	12,343
3.	Rajasthan	2,29,770	926
4.	Hyderabad	68,768	
5.	Madhya Pradesh	56,535	
6.	Madhya Bharat	51,438	
7.	Orissa	45,021	
8.	Gujarat	18,396	
9.	Tamilnad	14,252	1,877
10.	Andhra	10,299	
11.	Kerala	10,000	
12.	Maharashtra	9,270	698
13.	Saurashtra	8,000	
14.	Delhi	7,659	
15.	Vindhya Pradesh	3,700	
16.	Punjab	2,435	
17.	Mysore	2,007	830
18.	Karnatak	1,634	
19.	Himachal Pradesh	1,350	
20.	Assam	1,349	
21.	Bengal	374	310
	Total	21,92,153	99,363

Note : 1. 38,174 acres of land has been distributed among 6,636 families. 2. Some of the lands received from donors in U.P. lay in other States. Such lands amounting to 15,000 acres have now been included in the figures of respective States and the figure for U.P. has therefore decreased to that extent.

KRISHNARAJ MEHTA,
Office Secretary,
Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh,
Sevagram (Wardha)

Sarvodaya Samaj

There will be no further enrolment of the *Sewakas*, i.e. the members of the Sarvodaya Samaj from after the 31st December, '53 till the next Sammelan, the office being busy during that period with work in connection with the next Sammelan. An announcement in this regard was already made earlier in July.

Those who have not yet received their Sewak number after the Chandil Sammelan will please note that their names are not on the Sewak Register.

Those who want to be enrolled as *Sewakas* will therefore please write to us for the application form and send it back duly filled in so as to reach us before the 31st December.

It is not usual to send more than one form to one individual.

Sarvodaya Samaj, VALLABHA SWAMI
Sevagram, 12-11-'53
(From Hindi)

HARIJAN

Dec. 5 1953

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

(*By Maganbhai P. Desai*)

What kind of constitution a free country should have for its people is, generally speaking, its own concern. Normally speaking, other peoples should have no say in the matter, much less any interference. However, Pakistan's constitution-making stands on a little different footing, specially because of the peculiar relationship that exists between India and Pakistan. The two countries that are separate States today were only a few years ago one people under one common Government.

And when they agreed to part as two separate States in 1947, they left each other giving certain hopes regarding their future policy; they also promised their own people certain things in relation to their future polity, such as, cordiality and good neighbourliness, friendship and goodwill, and a liberal policy towards the minorities in each State. Therefore, at the present time when Pakistan is framing its constitution, naturally the Indian people are drawn to observe it, even as its neighbour.

The Prime Minister of India referred to this matter in a public way, which is unfortunately, not being taken in its proper light by Pakistan. The matter is not a mere private concern of that State, but it is so vital that it might as well assume a wider effect and importance if not for the Asian world, at least for the Middle East and India.

We are at present living in a world which is quite different from what it was like in the feudal days of theocracy and clanish or religious isolationism. Not only our ideas and patterns of culture and civilization, ethics and religion, but also of trade and commerce are assuming international shape and are being increasingly governed by a world outlook which is a peculiar product of our modern age of science and internationalism. Therefore the matter of constitution-making in Pakistan does become a question of deep concern especially, to us in India, who are its neighbours.

The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, in its last session, took certain decisions which are of vital importance, even to its own people, chiefly the minorities who are naturally deeply disturbed by these. For instance, it has decided that the new State will be called the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Its President shall be a Mussalman. There will be separate communal electorates. No law will be passed in any of its legislatures, which is repugnant to the Koran and the Sunnah. There will be a State Board of Islam, whose function it will be to organize the teaching of Islam for every citizen. To decide what is repugnant to Islam will be not in the hands of a Board of Muslim divines, as was the original idea, but will be a justiciable matter for the court. These provisions forebode patent signs of communal bitterness and religious bigotry and are apparently on the basis of a new two-nation theory in Pakistan itself.

The representatives of the Hindu minority in the P.C.A. protested against these clauses, but to no avail. It was queerly argued against it that Pakistan was born of the two-nation theory, that Hindus and Mussalmans were two separate nations, and therefore it should persist in the affairs of the new State. However, did not Shri Jinnah say that once Pakistan was a separate State it will not discriminate between Muslims and Non-Muslims, but will work on the basis of equality of all its nationals, like other States in the modern world? Was that also not a word of honour given to India and Pakistan?

An exception has been made in the article of repugnance that monetary matters will be exempted from being required to be according to the Koran and the Sunnah. The reason is obvious: The Koran prohibits taking interest, usury etc. If that tenet is applied to the monetary and financial affairs of a modern State, its economy will not work even for a day. Rent, interest, banking etc. are an integral part of modern trade and commerce, and Pakistan cannot live without them with the outside world. The exception is therefore felt necessary and reasonable. So too must it be acknowledged that the non-Muslim minorities also should be exempt from the Koranic Law. For example, why should they not be excluded from the operation of the teaching of Islam under State compulsion? Why should the head of the State be a Muslim and none else? It is argued in its defence that more than 85 per cent of the people are Muslim, therefore, there is nothing peculiar or objectionable in that provision. If it is obvious, there need be no statutory provision. Even so, why should the Constitution debar any Pakistani national from being its President on the plea of his religion? Will it not create two classes — the privileged and the unprivileged, the faithful and the infidel, the chosen and the non-chosen? Does it not undermine the very fundamentals of democratic rule?

The main question is, does Pakistan choose to be a theocratic State? What will be the nature of Islam that will be recognized as State religion? How will other Muslim States look at it? Will such a State be a tenable proposition in the modern world? This is a question that Pakistan must answer to itself before launching on its theocratic journey.

Again, a religious book is not a code of common law, though the Koran is said to contain it; but that is or can be for the faithful only, not for

others. The meaning of religion is again a thing to be evolved and interpreted by living it in our individual life; it is not a matter of law courts.

Such are some of the questions that will arise for Pakistan if it decides to be an Islamic State as described above. That will be unnecessarily taking time to learn the lesson that Turkey learnt to its benefit by first becoming a Muslim State and then changing over to a modern political State. In which case, Pakistan will have perhaps to be ready to face a revolutionary change in the near future, unless it decides to take the lesson that modern Turkish history has given.

30-11-'53

NOTES

The Greed of Advertisement Revenue

A friend, drawing my attention to an advertisement about cigarettes on the back of the Ahmedabad Bus Service ticket, asked why the Government or semi-Government bodies should not shed the greed of deriving revenue by advertising things socially objectionable or harmful.

I appreciated his question and suggested him to approach the proper authority in the matter.

Publicity has today become a lucrative profession; the advertisers are obviously under the illusion that they thereby increase their custom. There are advertising agencies which work as an intermediary between advertisers and publicity firms; there are too writers who write advertisements in attractive, rather deceiving language and painters who paint them in such colours and pictures. Lately, an art and a psychology of advertisement have developed. Thus it has become a veritable malady in modern civilized society.

Is it proper for the Government or public bodies to act in matters of advertisements only from the motive of earning income, irrespective of good or bad results, they may bring about in the social health of the nation?

Why should not the bus tickets carry advertisements only in respect of programmes and works which the Government intends to do? Why should not be there instructions about cleanliness, public health and such other welfare activities? If they do not do so, what is the distinction between a private enterprise and a nationalized one? What are the advantages of nationalizing an industry if the same profit motive works there as in the private enterprise? What is the object of Government behind encouraging cigarettes and tobacco?

The Government and public bodies should make discrimination in matters of advertisement. But unfortunately they also become a prey to the greed of advertisement income. And unhappily advertisers of socially objectionable matters offer higher rates. Government and public bodies should shed off such greed in the public interest.

26-11-'53

(Translated from the original in Gujarati) M. P.

Being Both Wet and Dry

A reader of the *Harijan*, from Cochin sends me a cutting of a government advertisement from the *Hindu* of 10-11-'53, which says that the State hotel in the "tourists' paradise, Periyar wild life Sanctuary" will have the following inviting amenities:

> "Three hundred square miles of tropical forests for hiking......Ten square miles of Periyar Lake's placid waters for boating and rowing. Fine double-storeyed hotel, with single and double rooms, all modern comforts and excellent cuisine *and bar*. Ideal spot for restful, zestful stay."

The correspondent naturally brings to my notice "the bar" that will give "zestful stay" in the "tourists' paradise". He remarks to bring out the dismal contradiction in the State policy which, on the one hand, prohibits drink in some places while, on the other, it provides for a State bar at another. This is really blowing hot and cold, — being wet and dry at the same time. What a tragedy it is that this rope-dancing feat is being perpetrated under Congress Government auspices and a Constitution that avers that prohibition will be the State policy!

24-11-'53 M. P.

UNEMPLOYMENT: NO PROBLEM

(*By J. C. Kumarappa*)

We are constantly hearing discussions about the problem of unemployment from top ranking leaders right down to students, but hardly any one realizes that this problem is really no problem at all. In reality the problem is a disease that should vitally concern each one of us.

Man has several requirements to make his existence possible. The fulfilment of these requirements is part and parcel of his life. When he is engaged in obtaining what are essentials for him he is gainfully occupied. A bird picks up a fruit and eats it. Then in the natural course the seed is deposited elsewhere and that begins the work of planting a new life. The bird is gainfully employed, though unwittingly, both when it picks up the fruit and eats it and also when it deposits the seed. In the same way, in human life whatever we do to fulfil our needs and how we dispose of the results forms what is generally known as work. If there is an absence of such fulfilment or occupation it results in what we call "unemployment". Unemployment results when we do not get our requirements in a co-operative social order by our own efforts. Such fulfilment is not a function of society but it is a part of our very being, like breathing. Without it we move towards death. Unemployment is not a problem but a disease. If one overeats and as a consequence suffers from a stomach upset, such upset is not a "problem" by itself but a result of our action. There is no separate "solution" for it. The remedy is simple. Stop overeating and control the palate.

In the final analysis, such a co-operative social order cannot be universal. It can only

work within reasonable limits when it is properly organized to produce all that society needs. The more we obtain our requirements by the efforts of another social order, our own chances of living within our society disappear. Thus "employment" gets equated to a "living".

The existence of unemployment indicates that we are not getting our requirements by our own efforts. In simple words, we are obtaining our needs from other countries by outside efforts. This is unhealthy. The solution to this situation naturally lies in obtaining our needs in a way which will call for local organization. This is "Swadeshi". Hence the cure for "unemployment" is the development of a spirit of Swadeshi.

Our country exports large quantities of oilseeds, hides, skins, etc. and then receives back the finally produced articles from these raw materials. Employment is a factor that had been dropped out between the raw materials and the finished products. It lies in our power to insert this and solve the unemployment problem. In other words, we must process our own raw materials and produce all our requirements. The resuscitation of these two industries alone — oil pressing and tanning — will bring hope and cheer to several millions of oilpressmen and Chamars. In this way only we can find real life-giving and self-respecting employment for our people and not by giving doles in the form of salaries for work which is not productive. Hence exports of raw materials and imports of finished products are the main factors in creating unemployment. As long as this state of affairs is not tackled it will be in vain to look for "avenues of employment".

Similarly, also when we use "labour-saving" machinery, while manpower remains unutilized, we are creating unemployment. It is necessary for us to solve our unemployment problem only through these means. Centralization of the production of the consumer goods indicates that we have departed from the natural course of man finding employment in the simple way of providing his own needs.

Our considerations show that unemployment is a thing of our own misdeeds — a sin. A great deal can be done to cure this social disease of unemployment by the Government organizing work in such a way that men are employed in supplying their own needs. Citizens can also help in restricting their purchases to those things only which have been brought into existence by our own people. In short, this implies the promotion of a spirit of Swadeshi and the extension of the principle of decentralization of production. This devil can be exorcised only by prayer and fasting, i.e. by right thinking and self-control. Let us grapple with this demon at this level with purposeful determination to eradicate it, cost it what it may.

(From *Gram Udyog Patrika*, November, 1953).

SAFEGUARDS FOR KHADDAR

Khadi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru used to say, is "the livery of freedom". It is more: It stands for a way of life and behaviour. It is the epicentre of life and livelihood of the lowliest and the lost. Through it was hope brought to the stricken millions of India. It signified the rise of a new confidence in them. Its revival as a potential weapon against poverty and want acted as the greatest incentive to the growth of other village and cottage industries which at one time occupied the pride of place in Indian art and handicrafts. It brought a new concept in economic planning.

But Khadi should not be mixed with any other kind of merchandise. It has a special place of its own and has special claims for safeguards against all kinds of spoliation. When Khadi came to be accepted by the Indian people as "the livery of freedom" during the period of our national struggle, attempts were made to pass off any rough cloth as Khadi. The mills produced coarse, uneven cloth and sold it as Khadi. Businessmen exploited the poverty of the village spinners and weavers to produce cheap cloth and sold it for their personal profit. Often hand-spun and mill yarn were mixed in the production of cheaper coarse cloth of the handloom. This too was sold as genuine Khadi. In the bargain, the village poor were cheated of their rightful due.

This caused grave concern to Gandhiji and the All India Spinners' Association. After great deliberation a system was evolved by which genuine Khadi could be protected against the profiteer and the spurious manufacturer. The system was to fix a wage level to Charkha spinners and to certify Khadi. Certification by the All India Spinners' Association, of production and sales centres to a certain extent prevented the exploitation of Khadi; but its exploitation could not be completely stopped. Efforts were, therefore, made to get for Khadi legislative safeguards. Consequently the Central Legislature passed the "Khaddar (Protection of Name) Act in 1934".

More serious attention was paid to the legislative protection of Khadi after the attainment of Independence. The Government of India, in 1950, repealed the 1934 Act and enacted another under the same name. In this Act 'Khadi' and 'Khaddar' were defined as cloth woven on handlooms from yarn hand-spun in India and the cloth was brought under the ambit of the Indian Merchandise Marks Act. This Act sought to prevent sale of any other cloth under the name of Khaddar or Khadi. It, however, did not provide for any effective machinery for the regulation of the sale of Khadi. The implementation of the provisions of the Act was left to the State Governments. For most part, the Act remained innocuous.

The shortcomings in the above Act were to be removed by a subsequent Bill which was circulated to the State Governments for enactment. Great importance, therefore, attaches to the "Revised Sale of Khaddar Bill" which the Government of India has circulated.

The All India Khadi and Village Industries Board considered the provisions of this measure at its recent meeting in Bombay. The Board felt that legislation in this regard should be uniform for all the States. At its meeting in Bombay it has suggested certain material amendments which in its opinion provide adequate safeguard against exploitation of the sentiment of the consumer of Khadi.

Three main considerations enter into any discussion of the Bill in relation to its effectiveness to achieve its objects. Firstly, the integrity of the person who is permitted to sell Khadi must be ensured. The second consideration is ensuring the genuineness of Khadi offered for sale. Thirdly, the integrity of the licensing authority which will regulate and supervise the production and sale of Khadi.

Certification of Khadi was the duty hitherto, of the All India Spinners' Association which has now merged with the Sarva Seva Sangh. The Sarva Seva Sangh has decided not to concern itself with production of Khadi for sale or with the work of marketing of Khadi. Such activities as certification of Khadi and regulation of the work of sales organizations, which the Association performed in the past, have now to be undertaken by another agency. With the establishment of the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board there is, fortunately, at hand such an agency, functioning all over India. The Board has asked for itself the authority of issuing licences. The genuineness of Khadi is to be assured by the recognition accorded by the Khadi Board to producers and producing centres which confirm to the standards laid down by it.

The Board has further suggested that the term "dealer" should mean a person who carries on the business of selling Khaddar or Khadi, whether wholesale or retail, and who holds a licence from the licensing authority. He should have no interest anywhere in the country in the sale of mill yarn, mill-made cloth, handloom cloth woven out of mill yarn, and cloth which is a mixture of hand-spun and mill yarn. He should not sell Khadi obtained by him through other than recognized producers and producing centres. Where the issue of a licence is refused or is disputed, provision has been made for appeal.

It is to be hoped that the Draft Bill, as sought to be amended by the Board, will be accepted by the Government of India and the State Governments.

(From a bulletin issued by All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board).

A FEW PERTINENT QUESTIONS

(*By Vithaldas Bodani*)

If "all who think for the middle classes" would seriously and sincerely "ponder over the few remarks" made by Shri Maganbhai Desai on the plight — and causes thereof — of the middle class, they would surely agree with him and his timely "suggestion of thrift, austerity and simplicity in life added by home industries." (*vide Harijan*, 31-10-'53; p. 280).

The readers of *Harijan* would bear with me if I venture to humbly submit here that:

(a) the plight of the middle class people is worsening day by day, not solely because their tenuous incomes cannot compete or cope with the rising prices, but fundamentally because the number of the middle class people is mounting up with the speed with which mechanical industrialization in the country is stepping up;

(b) the worst inflation that has ever come so far has come in the number of those who take to the common middle class professions or vocations, i.e., in the number of competitors in the same narrow field;

(c) the large influx of rural people in the urban areas is but the principal factor responsible for such 'inflation' and 'competition' and, consequently, for the economic degradation of this class as a whole; and

(d) with this ever rising inflation, the flair for mechanical values of life, the tendency to avoid physical labour, and the madness of aping the Western 'higher' standard of living are also proportionately 'inflating'.

The truth behind the sad plight of the middle class people is that its roots are set in the mechanical industrialization itself. Their salvation, therefore, lies only in going back to villages, in building new villages for them instead of expanding the thickly populated cities, and in providing them with village vocations calling for productive physical labour and associated with agriculture and such other industries which have their bearing on completely decentralized economy, i.e., the economy based on total decentralization of Production, progressive decentralization of Procurement and/or Collection and forthright decentralization in Distribution.

A few pertinent and pointed questions automatically arise here: Does such 'revolutionary' policy effecting basic and radical changes in the national economy of the country or does such up-to-date increase in the number of new, self-reliant and self-sufficient villages find any place in our plannings and projects? For this specific purpose, what plans are there to depopulate the middle-class-crammed cities and to stop the draining of village wealth by cutting, from the very roots, the unhealthy inflation of mechanized industries, as conditions precedent to the village and home industries being encouraged and boosted up?

Millions collected by way of direct and indirect revenues from the rural areas are being

spent and squandered, year in and year out, for feeding and fattening mechanized industries, on expanding or modernizing the over-bursting cities, and after the problematic comforts of the urban people. What plans are there not only to stop but actually to reverse this damaging flow of rural, i.e., national wealth, before advising or exhorting people to go back to the villages and to take to homecrafts and village industries?

Kashi-Mira
12-11-'53

BHOODAN AND LAND EVICTIONS

(*By Suresh Ramabhai*)

Unfortunately eviction of poor tenants or cultivators is a common feature these days in our country. Perhaps its basic reason is the policy of some of the State Governments to enact new tenancy legislations as a prelude to the abolition of Zamindari and consequent fear overtaking a majority of landlords and big peasants of losing their lands, whence their anxiety to keep hold on as much land as possible.

Obviously, land evictions are not a result of the Bhoodan Yajna movement. But a very pertinent question is how the movement proposes to handle and meet the aforesaid sad development.

When 'Zamindari Abolition Day' was officially observed in U. P. on July 1, 1952, Acharya Vinoba had remarked in his post-prayer address that he did not feel happy over it, since the condition of the landless millions remained unchanged. When his attention was drawn to hundreds of land-eviction cases, he asked the U. P. Government to check and stop that calamity. The U. P. Government, it was reported, did send instructions to its officers accordingly, but not to very great effect. Shri Vinoba's advice to the tenant was to cling to his bit of land and refuse to be evicted — an advice which he is consistently giving. But quite often the peasant is not strong or courageous enough to stick to his land and hence he resigns himself to his fate.

What then is the duty of the Bhoodan worker towards the evicted peasant?

The peasants evicted may be divided into two categories: (i) Those who continue to occupy five acres of land or more even after eviction, and (ii) those who are reduced to the landless state. Presently, the Bhoodan worker would not be able to render any practical help to the former, except sympathy. In the case of the latter, he would approach the evictor-landlord or big peasant and persuade him to donate the land cultivated by the evicted peasant for re-distribution to him again. It is hoped that a proper, courteous and dignified approach would prove fruitful in restoring the land to the poor evicted.

An illustration of this is provided by a case tackled by Acharya Vinoba himself at Bodhgaya in August last. But it may be rightly argued, everybody is no Vinoba to succeed like him. There is, however, another instance of Gaya district where a peasant was evicted in the Fatehpur Thana in which a worker, Shri Govind Rao, was carrying on Bhoodan work. When Shri Govind Rao learnt of the same he met the landlord and putting the whole case before him appealed to him to donate that land as gift. The appeal had its effect; land was acquired and restored to the original tiller-cum-owner. It was a triumph of gentle persuasion. Manifestly, when a Govind Rao can succeed anybody else can as well.

Thus the Bhoodan worker does not encourage Zamindar-Kisan clash. Nor does he try to ignore or overlook it, if there be one. His is to prevail gracefully upon the good sense of the landowner to make him see reason and do justice. In fact, the Bhoodan movement seeks to enlighten the heart of the landlord to read the signs of the times and act according to the time-spirit in a manner immune from bitterness.

Also it must be understood that Bhoodan sanctions no individual ownership of land (or property). Tomorrow, if not today, all land would come to be owned by the society which would, in a family way, distribute it according to one's need. So long as this state is not reached, attempts should be made to convince the landowner and convince again and again, and make him donate land by virtue not only of his duty to but also of the right of the dumb member of the family, otherwise called the landless or resourceless cultivator.

Finally it must be observed that, as the Bhoodan spirit pervades the air land evictions would automatically cease. There would be a willing abolition of Zamindari by the Zamindars themselves, none could be landless and the ownership of land would rest with the society. The only thing wanted, however, is the required number of workers to propagate the Bhoodan message and carry it to every village and hut.

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